

Howell Conference and Nature Center Class Descriptions

All programs are available year round and are one hour unless otherwise noted.

Birds of Prey

Learn about the many different behaviors and specialized characteristics of a bird of prey. A trained bird handler will present live birds of prey in this informative program. *Program available year round.*

Endangered Species

An in-depth discussion about animals and plants that are endangered, extirpated, extinct or protected will take place. Students will learn how and why some species survive or adapt better than others, and what can be done to prevent further destruction. *Program available year round*

Mammals

Using study skins, live mammals or slides, students will learn the characteristics unique to mammals. *Program available year round*

Owls

Learn many fascinating facts about the owls. Live owls will be used to demonstrate characteristics and behaviors of this nocturnal bird. *Program available year round*

Wolves

Beth Duman, renowned expert in her field, will give an in-depth discussion about our world's wolf population. An extraordinary slide show presentation of her travels studying this animal will be shown. *Program subject to availability of the instructor, additional fee does apply.*

Reptiles

Beth Duman, renowned expert in this field, will bring in her live reptiles for display and discussion. Learn many interesting facts on a variety of reptiles. *Program subject to availability of the instructor, additional fee does apply.*

Skins and Skulls

A variety of skins and skulls are examined noting their characteristics. Animal skins and skulls will be used to demonstrate predator and prey characteristics. Sample discussions may include predator/prey relationships, winter adaptations, behaviors, etc. *Program available year round*

Predator Prey

After a short introduction to characteristics of predator and prey animals, students will learn important concepts in predator-prey relationships through the use of fun and active games. Protective coloration, food chains and webs, adaptation, and producers and consumers are just a few of the subjects that can be covered. *Program available year round*

Wild Wonders – 1 hour

Learn about the many different mammals and birds that are housed at our Nature Center on a guided tour. A short discussion on each mammal or bird will be held regarding their habits and why they are at the Center. Also, learn about our role as an Animal Rehabilitation Facility and what you can do to help. A few of the animals that will be seen on this tour include a bobcat, eagle, beaver and various birds of prey. *Program available year round*

Wild Wonders – 2 hour

This program includes everything the one hour tour has and will also include a stop at our Interpretative Center. Here the students will be able to catch a glimpse into the past and learn about how this area looked before and after it was first settled, how it looks today and the in future. This program will also go into more detail about the Nature Centers Rehabilitation Program including a mock set up of our infirmary to show how we work behind the scenes. *Program available year round*

The Bat Cave

Students will learn about the various bat species around the world and their ecological importance. A slide show and games will accompany an in-depth discussion. *Program available year round*

Animal Tracks

Finding and identifying animal tracks may sound easy, but it takes a lot of patience and knowledge. Learn the tips and tricks to identifying different tracks with a fun activity. *Program available year round*

Life in a Pond (Spring Only)

This program exposes the student to the wondrous world of the pond ecosystem. Armed with dip nets and buckets, students will really “get into” this activity. *Program is available in the SPRING only.*

Basic Ecology

Students will explore the basic concepts of ecology which may include habitats, species relationships, adaptations, predator/prey relationships, food chain and food web. A group representative may request a topic to be emphasized during the program. *Program available year round*

Food Chain

This is a variation of our popular “Predator/Prey” program. Centering on the food chain, this program will incorporate fun games and activities. *Program available year round*

Adaptations

Students will learn about animal adaptations. They may participate in activities to reinforce what they have learned. *Program available year round*

Tree Detectives

Students will learn to identify trees that are common in Michigan. Participants will be able to see and feel specific trees as they go on a nature hike. *Program is not available in the winter.*

Orienteering I

This class teaches the basic use of a compass. Students will test their skills by following a fun beginner’s orienteering course. *Program available year round*

Orienteering II - 2 hours

This two-hour course will use the skills learned in Orienteering I. Students will combine the use of a compass and a map on a fun and challenging course. *Program available year round*

Exploring Maps

Students will discover and explore the joy of reading maps. Information will be presented on a variety of maps and their uses. The program will end with a fun and challenging outdoor map activity. *Program available year round*

Survival with Shelters

Students will learn basic outdoor survival strategies through the use of hands-on activities. Small groups will then build their own debris hut for shelter. *Program available year round.*

Survival with Fire Building

Students will learn basic outdoor survival strategies through the use of hands-on activities. After learning how to construct various types of survival fires, small groups will attempt to build their own. *Program available year round*

Survival with Fire and Shelter Building – 2 hours

This course combines the skills learned in both the fire and shelter building classes. Students will construct a shelter along with building a fire in small groups. A greater emphasis will be placed on survival skills. *Program available year round*

Animal Rehab

Students will learn about the Howell Nature Centers Animal Rehabilitation Program through equipment demonstrations, rehabilitation technique discussions and a short skit culminating with fun games and activities. Our goal is that the participant will gain a greater understanding of what to do if an injured animal is found. *Program available year round*

General Nature Hikes

Scavenger Hunt

Students will search for items on a scavenger list (suitable to their age) in nature. A discussion of what was found and other general information will be given. *Program available year round*

Edible Plants

Take a hike along a beautiful stretch of trail and learn how to identify plants and trees that are edible or inedible. You may even get to try a natural snack on your hike. *Program is not available in the winter.*

Nature in Winter

This course is a fun and informative winter interpretive hike that discusses how nature handles the cold winter months. *Program is only available during the winter.*

Glaciers

Using visual aids students learn what a glacier is and how they have sculpted the landscape of North America. Student will also learn where to find evidence of glaciers in Michigan and North America. This is followed by an interactive hike to discover evidence of glacial activity and discuss the effects of global climate shifts.

Social Studies

Global Village – 2hours (Working Partnership with Heifer Project International)

Bring your group to tour our village and participate in a hands-on program designed to educate children and adults about global issues. Through education that emphasizes experience, participants will gain a greater awareness of world hunger, poverty, and population issues. Our Global Village includes homes representing Rural America, Africa, a Shantytown, Nepal, Thailand, and a barrio (urban slums in any country). *Program available year round*

Global Village – 4hours (Working Partnership with Heifer Project International)

In our half-day program, your group will experience the two-hour program with the addition of a more in-depth look at world cultures. The focus on one site will include the preparation of a meal from the highlighted culture. *Program available year round*

Global Village – 8 hours and overnight (Working Partnership with Heifer Project International)

For an interactive approach, our eight-hour and overnight programs provide participants a first hand experience with global issues. Divided into “family groups”, given basic resources, and placed into world sites, groups must trade to meet their basic needs, prepare their evening meals and settle in for the night. *Program available year round*

Drumming

We will discuss the use of the drum in past and present day settings. Students will join us in many educational and fun drumming games and activities. *Program available year round*

Native American with Games

Students will learn many different aspects about past and present day Native Americans and their culture. This class includes a hike to our Native American area and a tour of our Longhouse, and Tipi structures. This class does incorporate games that were played by Native American children. *Program available year round*

Native American with Drumming

Students will learn many different aspects about past and present day Native Americans and their culture. This class includes a hike to our Native American area and a tour of our Longhouse, and Tipi structures. In this class students will discuss the many reasons the Native Americans have for using the drum and will have a chance to participate in drumming games and activities.

Challenge Programs

High Ropes Course

With the instruction of trained and experienced facilitators, participants will experience a high challenge involving a series of obstacles constructed of cables, platforms, beams and ropes suspended 25 feet of the ground on the South Pines Course and up to 35 feet on the North Pines Course. Equipment is provided. *Program is not available in the winter. Minimum of 3 hours needed. Extra cost does apply.*

Climbing Tower

Participants are taught the fundamentals of wall climbing and then test their abilities on our 60-foot climbing tower. The tower has climbs for beginners and experienced climbers. All participants wear seat harnesses and helmets. Equipment is provided. *Program is not available in the winter. Minimum of 2 hours needed. Extra cost does apply.*

Climbing Wall

Participants are taught the fundamentals of wall climbing and then test their ability on the 28 foot climbing wall. Everyone climbs as far as they are able with the encouragement and support of the group. Equipment is provided. All participants wear seat harnesses and helmets. Equipment is provided. *Program is not available in the winter. Minimum of 2 hours needed. Extra cost does apply.*

Zip-line

Come experience the thrill of a ride through the trees on our 500-foot long freestanding zip-line. Equipment is provided. *Minimum of 1 ½ hours needed. Extra cost does apply.*

Initiatives/Low Ropes

Your group will experience a sequence of problem solving challenges designed to enhance communication, cooperation, mutual support and trust. With the use of props, series of ropes, cables and wooden structures, group members solve increasingly difficult problems presented by our trained facilitators. *Minimum of 2 hours. Extra cost does apply.*

Obstacle Course

On obstacles ranging from 1 foot to 3 feet off the ground, your group will traverse wire cables and swing on ropes while encountering such things as the Alligator Swamp, Cobra Island and the Raging River. *Program available year round*

Adventure Play

Designed for younger children, this program introduces the concept of working with others to achieve a common goal. The group will progress from individual activities to partner activities to group activities. Cooperation will be emphasized over competition. The children will play fun, interactive games to encourage cooperative and communicate skills. *Program is for kindergarten -3rd grades.*

Activities

Archery

Under the guidance of our trained instructors, students will learn basic archery techniques. Safety will be emphasized. Students will use a recurve bow and target arrows as they attempt to hit a bull's eye. *Program is not available during the winter.*

Camp Store/Games

This one hour activity gives students a time to explore our camp store/gift shop and purchase wonderful souvenirs to take Howell Nature Center memories with them. Students will then spend some time playing fun interactive games. *Program available year round*

Canoeing/Boating

This great program offers an introduction to canoeing with plenty of information, including canoeing safety and specific techniques. Secure your life jacket and spend the remainder of the class developing your skills canoeing on beautiful Pleasant Lake. *Program is not available during the winter.*

Fishing

This course will consist of safety instructions and fishing fundamentals followed by fishing in beautiful Pleasant Lake. *Program is not available during the winter.*

Capture the Flag

A fun activity that can be played during the day or evening. *Program available year round*

Hayride

Sit back and enjoy the scenery as your group rides through our rustic trails. *Program is not available in the winter. Capacity dependent on age and size of group.*

Arts and Crafts

Age appropriate crafts with nature themes are available for your group. Contact us for a current list. *Program available year round*

The Art of Magic

Students will enjoy a magic show and will learn the art of magic. *Program available year round*

Be a Juggle Bug

Students will enjoy a juggling show and will have the opportunity to learn how to juggle on their own. *Program available year round*

Games Galore

A fun filled hour where students can learn new group games, expend some extra energy, and have loads of recreational fun. This program can be chosen as a daytime activity or an evening program. *Program available year round*

Night Programs

Hayride

Sit back and enjoy the scenery as your group rides through our rustic trails. *Program is not available in the winter. Capacity dependent on age and size of group.*

Campfire

Get your ghost stories ready! Sit back and relax under the stars while enjoying the warmth of the fire. Our staff will get the fire started for you we just ask that you supervise this program. *Program available year round*

Skit Night

This two part program begins with an actual skit class where students will learn acting techniques and skits. The second part is an evening activity, where the skits will be performed. *This program is for overnight groups only, and will use one activity hour during day for teaching of skits.*

Dance

Put on your dancing shoes! Our instructor will teach your group some classic dance moves mixed in with modern music to give it an all new spin. *Program available year round*

Night Hike

This hike focuses on the sights and sounds of the evening. Activities may include Lifesaver sparking, star observation, sensory games and much more. Activities vary with the season and length of evening hours.

This program is for overnight groups only.

Capture the Flag

A fun activity that can be played during the day or evening. *Program available year round*

Worldwide Games

This program features board games from around the world that will bring out the kid in all ages. This inside activity is more appropriate for overnight groups. It works well as a filler, free time or evening activity. *Program available year round*

Action Auction

Students will exercise their creativeness and imagination by using common things to create items and gain points for their team in this fast paced activity. *Program available year round*

Song Fest

Teams will have to think of songs from a given topic and perform them to get points in this exciting activity. Points are given for creativeness, group effort, and fun factor. Extra points can be earned in the mystery song round. *Program available year round*

Adventure Scrabble

Teams race against time and other teams in order to get scrabble pieces for their “thinkers.” Scrabble pieces are earned by racing from station to station and performing the task asked to earn their piece. The thinkers then turn the scrabble pieces into words for points.

Program available year round

Free Time Activities

Basketball/Volleyball/Soccer

Equipment is available for use on your own.

Winter Programs

Snow Shoeing

Learn the history and techniques of snow shoeing as you snow shoe our beautiful trails at the Howell Nature Center. We offer snowshoes to rent or bring your own. *Rental fee applies if not being taught by one of our instructors.*

Cross Country Skiing

Bring your own cross-country ski equipment or rent equipment on site. Let our trained instructors take you on a journey along our beautiful trails. *Rental fee applies if not being taught by one of our instructors.*

Sledding

Bring your own or use ours during your free time.

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